This is Free Trader Beowulf,
Calling anyone...
Mayday, Mayday... we are under attack...
Main drive is gone...
Turret number one not responding...
Mayday... loosing cabin pressure fast...
Calling anyone... please help...
This is Free Trader Beowulf...
Mayday...

TRAVELLER

Science-Fiction Adventure in the Far Future

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Science-Fiction Adventure
in the Far Future

Marc Miller's classic setting for *Traveller*
using rules adapted from Ron Edwards' *Sorcerer* and *Sorcerer & Sword*
Character creation rules lifted from *Sorcerer* and *Sorcerer & Sword*
World Creation rules and equipment lifted from Mongoose's *Traveller*
All typos, broken grammar and ill-conceived ideas
are the responsibility of Christopher Kubasik

The Imperium

Three thousand years from now THE THIRD IMPERIUM rules an expanse of space spanning 11,000 worlds.

Interstellar travel is facilitated, and limited, by the use of a technology called the JUMP DRIVE. Jump drives are capable of propelling a starcraft between one to six parsecs, depending on the individual drive's specifications. Regardless of the distance of a jump, the duration required for the trip is approximately one week. Communication is limited to the speed of travel; there is no "sub-space" or other form or Faster-Than-Light information transfer. This restraint on the speed of information and communication leads to decentralization of the Imperium's authority and the vestment of significant power in the hands of local officials.

The Third Imperium has now ruled its territory for eleven centuries and looks to continue for many more. Interstellar government over such a large area, however, becomes a philosophical question; the problem initially seeming to be insurmountable. Distance, travel time, and communication lag all conspire against a functioning, efficient structure which can meet the needs of its subject population. But the lessons of history serve as a guide. Spain in the 16th century ruled much of the New World, with travel times of up to a year between the seat of government and the new territories. In fact, through most of history timely governmental communication, with both a rapid dispatch of instructions and an equally rapid response, has been a dream, not a reality.

The Imperium has come upon two solutions which together ameliorate the problems of distance: the xboat network and feudalism.

The Xboat Network

Like the body, with its network of veins and arteries, the Imperium is permeated by a network of xboat routes, or links, devoted entirely to the carriage of messages for official, commercial, and private purposes.

The EXPRESS BOAT (xboat) is a small, fast ship filled with a pilot compartment, message data banks, and jump drives. The fit is so tight that the tiny ships do not even have maneuver drives. Each is capable of jump-4 (four parsecs in a week); it jumps, relays its messages to the station on arrival, and then waits to be picked up by a tender, refueled, and sent on its way to the next station on the route. The local station on a world accepts messages, encodes them, and transmits them to a station at the edge of the stellar system. The network works like the pony express — with messages always moving at top speed. Transfer time for the messages from one xboat to another can be as short as ten minutes, and is rarely more than an hour.

The little xboats make their way to one of the many Imperial Way Stations scattered throughout the Imperium's subsectors. There they are refitted, overhauled, and refurbished, to be sent on their way again.

The xboat network makes the edge of the Imperium about forty four weeks out from the core and capital; that represents a savings of better than 50% of normal travel time. And still the Imperium is straining under the effects of distance.

Feudalism

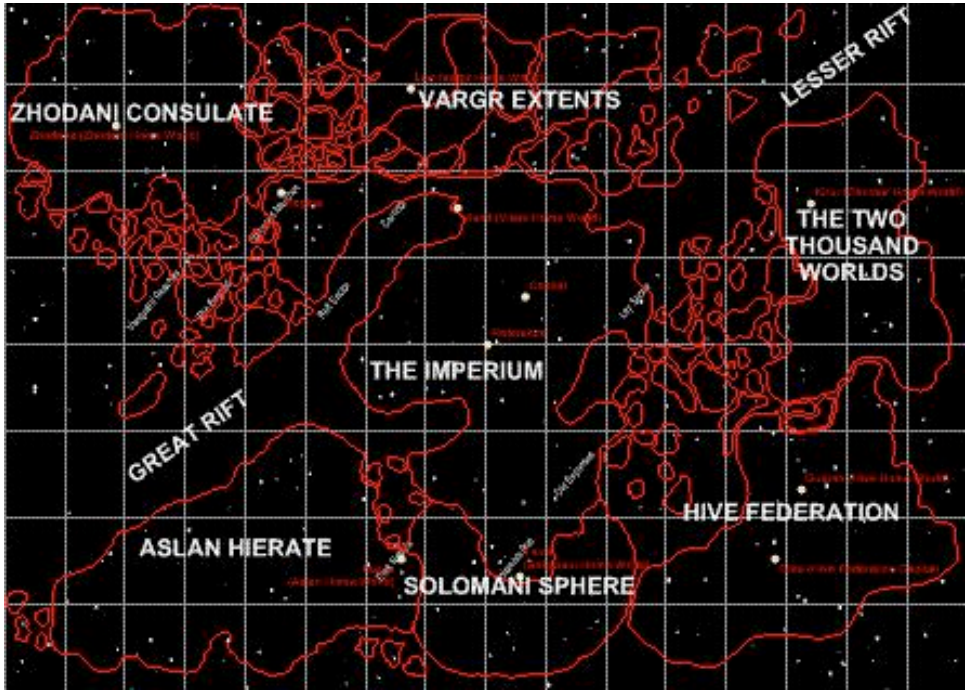
With such great distances separating stellar systems, individual responsibility and authority become of great importance. The Imperium is divided into SECTORS (twenty of them), each about 32 parsecs by 40 parsecs in size. Each sector is divided into sixteen SUBSECTORS (8 by 10 parsecs). And within a sector are perhaps thirty or forty systems, each with a star, worlds, and satellites.

Individual worlds, and even entire systems, are free to govern themselves as they desire, provided that ultimate power is always accorded the Imperium. Interstellar government begins at the subsector level — on one world designated the subsector capital. The ruling figure at the subsector capital is a high-ranking noble selected by higher levels of government. This duke has a free hand in government, and is subject only to broad guidelines from his superiors. But at the same time, the duke owes fealty to the higher levels of government, ultimately to the Emperor himself. The feudal approach depends greatly on a sense of honor, one cultivated by the hereditary aristocracy. This sense of honor is very strong within the Imperium; it has proven essential to the survival of such a far-flung community.

11,000 Worlds

The worlds of the Imperium are separated by great gulfs of space. Some exist along trade routes that see frequent travel. Others are so off the well-traveled jump routes that that contact with the rest of the stellar empire depends on a random tramp freighter arriving with news that is months old.

Worlds exist with different levels of technology, different scales of population, different kinds of government. Some are no more than threadbare outposts where thousands of religious refugees struggle to carve out a life on a harsh world. Others are almost magical fortresses of technology where floating cities financed by Imperium backed corporations do research and mine precious resources. The worlds scattered across the stars of the Imperium are rich and varied; although the Imperium's reach spans countless parsecs, its worlds are varied, specific and unique.



Interstellar Adventure

The Imperium rules "the space between worlds," leaving the rule of law upon worlds to the inhabitants of those worlds. The Imperium intervenes when the peaces it enforces to maintain trade and power is threatened, when new ambitions demand new aggression, or when a local fight is either going to put its power into question or spill over past the original borders of the conflict.

Even then, the Imperium's interstellar NAVY, MARINES, and ARMY are not evenly distributed throughout the stars. Given the Imperium's size, there will always be too many worlds to patrol and too few ships and troops to manage it all. Ships can journey for years at a time without contact from higher authority – especially at the fringes of the Imperium – and individual settlements are isolated and thus individualistic. This isolation causes entire wars to be fought, won, or lost on the frontiers before a message gets to the Capital to let the Emperor know the war has begun. This means that all kinds of agents, from merchants to generals, must show initiative and be reasonably independent from their corporate or political overlords.

Intelligent Species

At some point hundreds of thousands of years ago our region of the galaxy was dominated by a species, now known only as THE ANCIENTS, who wielded fantastic technology. It is believed that the Ancients destroyed themselves in a 2,000-year period of massive internecine warfare. Though long gone, the effects of the Ancients' reign are still evident, from the seeding of humanity (and creatures genetically engineered from Terran animals) across scores of worlds to the incomprehensible ruins and artifacts which are occasionally discovered.

Because of the Ancient's efforts, there are many worlds on which Human civilizations developed other than Earth. Two major space-faring races, the VILANI and the ZHODANI, arose from such transplants. SOLOMANI (humans of Earth) also eventually rose into interstellar dominance.

Humans are the most populous species in known space and thus rule or heavily influence most worlds. The result of 300,000 years of individual evolution on such widely divergent worlds (or, in some cases, deliberate genetic engineering by the Ancients) has resulted in broad speciation within the human genotype, however.

Major Races

A major race is defined as one that developed jump technology independently, and thus got an early start on establishing itself in interstellar society. In the setting it is generally agreed there are 6 major races, but how they are defined varies a little. For the purposes of this game, only four will be considered for now.

ASLAN are a bipedal species of vaguely feline appearance, slightly larger than human. Aslan society is organized into competitive clans, has a strict code of honor and very strict gender roles.

DROYNE are a short-statured, winged bipedal race of reptilian appearance. Droyne by nature are a highly conservative and group-oriented race, with a caste-based system dependent upon a combination of ritual and

biology. Though by far the oldest of the jump capable races, the Droyne were the last to be recognized as such because they do not control any interstellar regions, much less an empire. Instead they are scattered as independent communities on worlds throughout known space, their homeworld unknown even to them. Droyne completely control some worlds but generally share them with other races. A semi-intelligent sub-class, known as Chirpers, consist of Droyne colonies which have lost the ability to caste, and with it all knowledge of technological society or interstellar travel. It is conjectured that the Droyne were either a servant race of the Ancients, or are direct descendants of them.

HUMANITI is the spelling used for Humanity in the Third Imperium. When humans of Terra first reached out to travel to the stars most were very surprised to find that other humans were already there due to the machinations of the Ancients.

Three sub-races of humans independently developed jump drive technology and are therefore sometimes classified as Major Races in their own right. The first two (Solomani and Vilani) make up the majority of the human population of known space (and are thus increasingly culturally and biologically indistinct from each other); the third (the Zhodani) remains much more separated, both culturally, astrographically, and biologically.

- **The *Solomani* of Terra:** It is generally acknowledged that Terra is the original homeworld of Humaniti and that all subsequent sub-races are derived from primitive stock taken from this world by the Ancients. After achieving FTL star travel, the Solomani conquered the stagnant First Imperium of the Vilani and subsequently founded the Second Imperium, or "Rule of Man."
- **The *Vilani* of Vland:** They were the first race of Humaniti to invent the jump drive, and created the Ziru Sirka ("The Grand Empire [of Stars]"), or First Imperium. Traditional Vilani society is highly caste-based, prizes cooperation over individuality, and is extremely conservative. As the ecosystem of their homeworld is indigestible to humans in its raw state, Vilani cuisine (and much of its culture) is based on fermentation techniques.
- **The *ZHODANI* of Zhdant** (occasionally referred to as Zhodane): the Zhodani are known for their high level of psychic ability and its formal integration into their society, the Zhodani Consulate. The Zhodani

emphasizes the consistent honesty of Consulate citizenry (as befits a telepathically-based society), and distrust the psionically-averse Solomani (whom the Zhodani regard as duplicitous, thieving crooks).

Vagre are a bi-pedal canine species, slightly smaller than humans. This species resembles the Terran conception of a wolf-man because that is essentially what they are; canine stock taken from Terra that were genetically manipulated by the Ancients to an intelligent bipedal form in an attempt to create suitable servants. (The name Vargr comes from the Old Norse for "wolves").

Minor Human Races

As well as the three human races that are considered Major, there are at least 22 additional ones that are classified as minor races. Most human races are interbreedable and thus physically increasingly indistinguishable from each other, though a few have unique physiologies due to development in a harsh environment, a period that restricted the available gene pool or other uncommon factors.

CHARACTER CREATION

Several assumptions exist for your characters:

Your character has recently mustered out of a military service
He is trained, experienced, and battle tested. He might be in his 30s, 40s, or 50s after a distinguished or undistinguished military career. Now that he has left the service, what will he do with his days? What will he see as a worthy activity? Given that your character is versed in combat, experienced in war, trained for battle – what will he choose to do now that his life is his own?

Your character has a wandering bug
By definition, your character is not ready to settle down. Whatever compelled him to begin a life of motion, violence and risk is still in his system. This might be a temperamental issue or an issue of circumstance. Your character might have ambitions not yet met, debts to pay with blood, opportunities to seize, a problem with the law, a true love that can only be won with astonishing deeds, and so on... All of this is tied to your character's PRICE; something marked your character as a victim of wanderlust – what is it?

You decide your character's relationship to the Imperium and society as a whole
Your character might be loyal to the Imperium – or bitter and resentful for a host of reasons. You might be loyal to a local planet, or hunted by the husband of a woman you dishonored. You might be an up-and-comer out to prove yourself worthy of ruling a subsector, or the daughter in too large a royal family who has set out to carver her own role and identity.

Your characters are bound together through military service
Whatever ambitions or threats or unresolved business your character is focused on, you know you have each other's backs in a way no one else in the Imperium ever will. You know each other as brothers-and-sisters-in-arms, having fought, survived and protected each other. The definition of HUMANITY for this game is FRIENDSHIP. The friendship between the Player Characters *is what the game is about*.

PCs are Solomani, Vargr or Aslan
Moreover, the game is set within the social and political framework of the Imperium. Each PC, in one way or another, is a *citizen* of the Imperium. If your character is Solomani, he or she was born as a citizen. If Vargr or Aslan, he or she was either born as a citizen, or migrated to the Imperium and for whatever reason now lives within the Imperium's political and social structure. Another option is that your Character is not a citizen of the Imperium, but lives within and relation to the Imperium, and strives to become a citizen of the Imperium.

Scores

When creating a character, divide 10 points between STAMINA, WILL and THE RIFT. The fourth Score, PAST, is equal to either Stamina or Will, as determined by the Player.

STAMINA

Stamina is both a physical and mental phenomenon. It is not "body." Stamina is the impact on, and the influence over, physical motion and effect. When your character calls upon memories of childhood abuse to draw up hate in order to heft a tire iron through a bad guy's face – that's Stamina. By contrast, if a character looms large physically to intimidate someone, that Will. Stamina draws on whatever physical and mental reserves are necessary for its effect.

WILL

Will is both a physical and mental phenomenon. It is not "mind." Stamina is the impact on, and the influence over, personalities. When your character looms large physically to intimidate someone, that is Will. By contrast, when your character calls upon memories of childhood abuse to draw up hate in order to heft a tire iron through a bad guy's face – that's Stamina. Will draws on whatever physical and mental reserves are necessary for its effect.

THE RIFT

In the Third Imperium, "the rift" is slang for the gap that opens between people because of distances involved in space travel. Children who leave home and travel countless parsecs away leave a hole in their parent's

heart. Parents who take jobs that keep them away for months or weeks at a time become strangers to their families. Interstellar governments are fragile because it's difficult to keep interests shared when people are so far apart.

The phrase has a second meaning, as well. For those who travel the stars, the friends you travel with *are* your anchors to remaining connected to your humanity. "A man without friends is a man drifting in space," the saying goes. When people begin to lose this connection to others, it is said, "He's got a Rift going."

The Rift on a character's sheet is the threat to the Character's Humanity. It allows the Player Character to get things done in a variety of ways, but by taking action within The Rift the Player must make a Humanity check roll for the Character. To use The Rift – either as a Roll to get Bonus dice for a more important roll, or to tap unexpected resources within the fiction – the Character must do something in the fiction to gain more dice. Like Lore in *Sorcerer*, the in-fiction description of using The Rift produces Bonus Dice and builds a greater chance of success. But these descriptions all must threaten the Characters Humanity – which in this game is Friendship.

The Rift is a broad category of options containing several Descriptors to choose from. Players choose which Descriptor they want. A value of 4 or more allows Players to choose two Descriptors if they wish.

It is important that the Player add details to the Big Circle on the character sheet for The Rift quadrant. In the same way the Player should add details for Kicker, Price, and Past, so the Player should create NPCs and Locations that are part of the Player Character's Rift.

Past

Past represents the most significant piece of your Character's history in terms of experience, training, friendships and life in general. Players can tap this Score to accomplish things ("I'm rolling my Gunnery Sergeant to take that truck down!") to tapping contacts ("There's got a be a mercenary company somewhere around here,") to gathering resources ("Don't worry, I know where we can get some guns off the radar.")

Past Scores can be used to creates rolls for Bonus dice that roll into a roll on the other three Scores, just as the other three Scores can be used to roll in Bonus dice for a Past roll.

The Past Score is equal to the Character's Will or Stamina, at the Player's choice.

Descriptors

After you have assigned points choose descriptors from the lists below. Any Scores with a value of 4 or higher may choose two descriptors.

Stamina Descriptors

Natural Fighter: You're all about mixing it up; it's always been that way for you. It's your fun. Whether it's your buddies or some guy you want to kill, it's always a good time.
Trained Soldier: You get your physical prowess from your training and combat experience
Big and Vigorous: Speaks for itself.
Just healthy: (recommended Stamina = 2 or 3) This is for characters who are not physically special in any way.
Clever in Combat: You're a thinker, and you've learned the tactics and the strategies of how to take someone down.

Will Descriptors

Brush with the Unknown: In the course of an otherwise normal life, the character has encountered something strange: Psionics, the Ancients, a religion of mystical power. Ever since, nothing has been really satisfying. You must define the experience and the character's reaction to it ever since.
Aristocrat: This is not a social status as much as a state of mind. The character is "the cat who walks by himself," and all places are alike to him.
Zest for life: Wahoo! If it's fun or feels good, you go for it. If it doesn't, it's in your way.
Angry: The character is pissed off and thoroughly ready to express this state of mind to all and sundry.
Vow: The classic motivator. Vengeance, regaining property or status, whatever – you want it and you're going to get it.
Leader of men: Basic charisma; people trust you and respect the character. It is usually combined with focused or unfocused ambition; the character dislikes being anywhere except in a position of leadership.
Lover: The character derives great inner strength from the love or another, whether a specific person or anyone who he's interested in today.

"The Rift" Descriptors

Ambition: Your drive to get ahead or get something done serves you well, but on occasion makes you cold, putting those you care about at risk, or even makes you realize you don't care as much about them as you thought.

Duty: You have obligations – to the law, to a code, to a family – that allow you to tap resources, but also allow you to change loyalties when friendship vs. duty is on the line – because your sense of duty trumps all.

Psionics: Psionics is the study of powerful psychic disciplines. It requires incredible concentration as well as solitude. It allows you to manipulate objects or the minds of others. It is an invasive discipline. It also is the secret to tapping the artifacts and mysteries of the Ancients; but to do so is to begin to see Humanity from their cold perspective.

Social Standing: Whether your trying to attain, avoid it, are stuck in a criminal past, or hate folks with a snooty attitude, this Rift means that you are incredibly class conscious (no matter where you stand on the Social Standing ladder). You can tap resources of one kind or another, but also turn a cold shoulder when your agenda in the part of your life is at stake.

The Ticket: The cold calculation of killing for cash or seeing life only as a matter of violence is taking a toll on your soul. You can't afford to get to close to people, because they might be gone tomorrow – or because they're only fodder to set up the next paycheck. What matters is the job – and the next job, and the one after that. You know how to calculate the odds for the best chance of profit and survival – and that sometimes means burning folks who never saw it coming.

Past Descriptors

This descriptor is very flexible. For this game the only limitation is a variation on ***Army***, ***Marines***, or ***Navy***. But Players are free to create viable variations, such as ***Navy Officer*** or ***Marine Gunner***. This Score informs not only skills, but contacts, resources and anything else that falls under the umbrella of "My guy would know that."

Price

This is the thing that marks you in some way, giving you a -1 Die penalty in certain circumstances (“When in Space,” or “Fighting Unarmed Man”) that occurred at some time in your character’s history. It might have happened in the service, or be some incident from your characters childhood. No matter what, it is tied to the reason your character is a *Traveller*.

Kicker

Kickers are the things that start off the story for the Player Character. They are the situation that the Player "authors" for his PC.

Kickers are 1) emotionally grabby in some way to the Player; 2) demand a decision or action on the part of the PC (they can't be ignored); and 3) what that decision is remain open-ended until play ensues (which way the PC responds to the Kicker is unknown until the actual circumstances of the GM framing the scene and the Player interacting with the circumstances in play.)

Campaign Setting Notes

I fell in love with GDW's Traveller years ago when I picked up that little black box at the Compleat Strategist on 33rd Street in Manhattan. The character creation, the planetary creation and the implied setting of the Third Imperium stirred my imagination. I loved randomly generating details of worlds or characters and then thinking, "How does that all fit together." Creating starsystem, subsectors and all manner of political and social conflict was a blast. I saw countless hours of fun ahead of me as both a GM and as a Player.

However, the rules themselves always seemed to fail me in many ways. It wasn't until I started finding new rules written within the last decade that I started seeing the possibility of using the themes and setting that excited me from *Traveller* in a clear and upfront manner.

When I think of the *Traveller* universe that I imaged in my youth, I saw a sprawling universe of potential adventure where your character still had to get the bills paid to keep his ship going. I saw a universe so big your character could never reach its end, but with Player Characters who started their life as adventurers with already getting creaky. I saw an interstellar empire of infinite possibilities, with characters who had made choices in his youth that limited who he was in his forties.

This is an amazing and unique tension for RPGs. It's a completely different set of concerns than found in most RPGs – which cater to the delightful and high spirited point of view that "All I need to do is keep going and I'll get more powerful and powerful." *Traveller* was written from the point of a view of adulthood, and most RPGs (and this is neither good nor bad) work from the adolescent view that lacks an awareness of mortality death, decay or limits.

Does this mean there are no heroes in *Traveller*? No. The tales of *Beowulf*, *The Lord of the Rings*, Malory's Le *Morte D'Arthur* and other fantastic legends posit the tension between fantastic settings and heroic deeds against the encroaching weakening of muscles, the end of ages and life. It's significant, I think, that *Traveller* was on

the way to the printer before *Star Wars* hit the screen. It's a pre-*Star Wars* SF setting. This makes it not better or worse than "youth" tales – just different. *Traveller* is Clint Eastwood in a faded uniform traveling the stars.

An Example of Setting

When I first saw John Huston's *The Man Who Would be King*, I thought, "That's it! That's a *Traveller* game!"

It stars Sean Connery and Michael Caine as “Peachy” and Carnehan, two British soldiers drummed out of the British Empire's Army while serving in India.

They scam some money, buy a ton of guns, and head into the mountains of Afghanistan to set themselves up as warlords. They've been serving everyone else all their lives, but now they're going to have people serve them!

They find a peaceful nation buried far out of the way and take it over. But then one of them is seen as a King by the natives, jealousy starts to creep in-between their affection for each other... it's great.

No, it's not about space. But it is about guys who have been part of an Imperial military who have to figure out what to do. It's set at the fringes of the empire -- and then beyond -- which is an easy set up for a *Traveller* game. All this is portable to a space setting. There are even The Ancients from *Traveller* – in the form of the cult established in memory tied to Alexander the Great passing through the kingdom centuries ago – complete with ancient idols, lost cities and so on.

Men with Ambition

What drew me to *Traveller* was the thought of men with ambition, like the characters in *The Man Who Would be King* who had failed to make impression in society that they wanted, and were driven to extreme measures to get what they desired from society. Or Captain Sir Richard Burton tracking down the source of the Nile. Or the hero of *The Four Feathers* who, having failed his friends, returns to war to make amends with his own heart.

There is a tension in these stories and lives between the service men and the society they fight for. This is also is part of the *Traveller* set-up if you look at Social Rank. The *Traveller* rules never really explained how the

Social Rank was to be used or how to advance it. But it was clearly the only stat a PC could have that could easily be changed *within the fiction*. (All other stats and skills would take weeks of gameplay and months of game time to be increased.)

Given that the *Traveller* Player Character has left the service, he could go home and retire. He could start a new business. Raise a family. Cash in his experience in the military to get a cushy job as a cop or a security expert. But instead, it is assumed the Character continues a life of adventure. He becomes a traveler, wandering between stars, walking on the edge of the law (if not breaking it), using skills of violence and war for his daily bread and butter. There have always been men like this out there. What made them tick? It seemed to me that *Traveller* was begging for these questions to be addressed.

Finding the System

Something else that threw me off when I tried to build *Traveller* games was the lack of a cohesive bond for "The Party." In fantasy games this tool called The Party didn't implode *too* often – we all understood that this was how the setting worked – though it did run the Players on the rails sometimes.

But in a space game, with characters who might have individual, adult agendas and moral scruples, things got more complicated. Add to this the open ended physical nature of the Imperium (Players might have their characters go anywhere! One Player might really want to go to this planet while another Player wants his character to go to that one!) things could get out of hand and out of control really, really fast.

At the time I was working with assumptions and tools and techniques that didn't even let me see outside of the box called, "The Party." Now, of course, we no longer need a party... but usually the Player Characters are in the same arena of one kind or another, able to pop into each other's scenes at whim, to draw narrative material from each other's scenes easily, and to reincorporate facts from one character's scene into their own. The GM can weave NPCs and incidents into the background (literally, the back of the shot) of other Player Characters, and so on.

However, in a *Traveller* game, the Players might have their characters scattered across three sub-systems. The non-party play rests on the easy access that Player Characters have to one another. But *Traveller's* fiction

depends on travel being slow and unreliable. Moreover, the band of mercs or the crew of starship in this kind of fiction *is* part of the genre setting. So, how to make sure there is flexibility for the Players while still retaining a semblance of cohesion?

I tried several models with several rules sets, such as *The Shadow of Yesterday*, *HeroQuest,* or *Spirit of the Century* and others. Each would give me a chance to have Attributes that would give bonuses for Players having their Characters work together. But that didn't mean the Players wouldn't spin their Characters off in different directions once something more interesting came along.

An Unexpected Match

Around this time it dawned on me I could use the rules for *Sorcerer & Sword*, the supplement for *Sorcerer* using pulp fantasy as a setting. Several details caught my imagination right away for an easy port. These weren't matters of "mechanical" transfer or "genre emulation," but a point of view about how I wanted to work *creatively* with my players.

First, *Sorcerer & Sword* dispenses with the idea of a wholly created background pre-generated before play. As Ron Edwards writes in the rules: "The best bet is to begin with a map that offers just enough information to be intriguing, but still has plenty of scope for further creation, both in details of existing features as well as in whole unknown areas. The plan, of course, is to fill in those details and blank areas through play, adventure by adventure."

I had already spent too much time in years past rolling up sub-sectors of star systems only to see them never used or ignored. Or find that there was no way to really have enough information about each world no matter what once I had planned on having twenty or more worlds. Or find that the part that I though were going to be the big draw were going to be ignored by the Players, who in turn focused on some world or detail that I had considered insignificant.

However, I'd become armed with new techniques and tools for GMing role-playing games. I knew that my Players and I would sit down for a group character creation session before we started making story. From this I

knew that I'd find out a great deal about what sort of stories, themes and issues the Players wanted, as well as what NPCs, settings and situations they would be interested in.

I had already decided I wanted to keep the framework of GDW's Third Imperium from the *Traveller* universe, using the *Traveller* Little Black Books 0, 1, 2, and 3, as the bedrock for a game, with the color found in the books 4 through 7. (These books are, respectively, Introduction To *Traveller*, Characters and Combat, Starships, Worlds and Adventures, Mercenary, High Guard, Scouts, and Merchant Prince. All these books, along with *Traveller* Book 8 (Robots) are available in a single volume reprint from Far Future Enterprises.) I would keep the Planet Creation rules (which, like the Oracles form *In a Wicked Age*... are a source of too much fun and inspiration), but needed a new set of rules to handle conflict.

I also knew I wanted to set the game in Classic *Traveller's* Third Imperium. But, just as described in *Sorcerer & Sword*, I wanted to leave most of it "blank" and waiting to be "filled in." Thus, I'd be using a mix of the open-ended nature of Books 1-3 and grab what background elements for situation and setting I wanted from published *Traveller* material. We'd set the game in The Spinward Marches, but it would be *our* Spinward Marches, with new worlds and politics defined and created through play. This, too, meshed easily with principles outlined in *Sorcerer & Sword*.

Secondly, the setting of *Sorcerer & Sword* makes the demons and option for the Player Characters. I thought, "Well, if I could play a whole game of *Sorcery & Sword* without the Players ever accessing demons, certainly I could have a whole setting without them!"

Suddenly, the entire port of the rules of *Sorcery & Sword* to GDW's *Traveller* universe (or the CT Traveller universe to *Sorcerer & Sword*!) began making more sense. The thought of Player Characters with previous careers dumped into a specific, story-provoking situations is exactly what *Sorcerer & Sword* does with Pasts and Kickers, respectively and seemed a natural fit. So natural, in fact, that when I realized that the Old Ones (or whatever ancient civilization creatures you wanted) from a *Sorcery & Sword* game would be a natural port to The Ancients from *Traveller*, I was no longer surprised. The Old One / Ancients left ruins of old civilizations, manipulated the current races of the settings as gods, and had created artifacts that current-day characters could fight over and use as prizes in conflicts.

All in all, the whole melding of *Sorcerer & Sword* and *Traveller* became less a matter of convenience (I knew the Sorcerer rules and wanted to keep using them), than the unexpected discovery that there were underlying story values that I saw in *Traveller* that matched up almost precisely with the assumptions of story modes in *Sorcery & Sword*.

The idea of war tested veterans wandering unknown lands, dealing with both contemporary politics, strange alien creatures, mysteries of a ancient civilization's past, driven by the heart-beat of the Player Characters passions (which, for me, was the goal), all made *Sorcerer & Sword* an almost preternaturally perfect fit.

I was especially pleased because I thought the conflict resolution system would be an excellent fit for the hard-as-nails combats I wanted (*Sorcerer* combats will bring you to your knees as quickly as the GDW *Traveller* system does!), but the rough-and-tumble, moment-by-moment "which way will my PC jump?" conflicts also felt very much of the *Traveller* universe. I wanted our veterans to be making quick, unanticipated choices every second as conflicts spun out of control in unexpected directions. The *Sorcerer* system delivers that in spades.

The Ties That Bind

One aspect of the transfer did stump me, though: What would be the definition of Humanity?

Humanity is the most important mechanic in a game of *Sorcerer*, and holds the same position in *Sorcerer & Sword*. It is the thematic focus of the game, allowing the Players to take their characters in all sorts of directions story-wise, but serves as a "sun" for all those actions to orbit.

I wasn't sure how to proceed, and started a thread at The Forge about the matter. I outlined everything I've written above (about *The Man Who Would Be King*, PCs as brothers in arms and so on) and asked for help finding a good definition of Humanity for the game.

Ron Edward's replied:

> *Anyway, regarding Humanity, it jumps right out at me from your sources: FRIENDSHIP. I agree that age, ambition, and limits of the past (successes as well as failure) upon the present are a big deal,*

but I think of those as the framework for the really trenchant outcomes for all those stories - which are about friends.

He then went on to ask a series of questions:

- *Is it friendship to sacrifice yourself for the friend? What if you do so to manipulate him?*
- *Is it friendship to go ahead and save yourself when your friend stands in the breach so you can do it?*
- *Is it friendship to back up your friend when he's being stupid? Is it friendship to kick him in the ass, or in some cases, to kick his ass really bad?*
- *How does shared experience and long history with shared duty, or with past success or failure, define friendship?*

When I think of all your references, that's what sings out at me.

This was exactly what I had been looking for. Strangely, a discussion about the Humanity definition for Sorcerer & Sword was taking place at the same time, and the same answer had been given there. Once again, the *Traveller* I wanted to play had lined up neatly with *Sorcerer & Sword*.

It is important to remember that the Humanity mechanic for *Sorcerer* is not a dry, intellectual exercise. It is not an academic matter. Just like in any story that catches our attention, the thematic material only matters if it actually matters to the Players at the table. So Ron finished his response with the following.

And not for internet answering, Christopher, but do you trust friendship? Does its dangers really outweigh its benefits, when we're not talking about George Lucas or Disney (in which friendship, success, duty, and reward always support one another)? And even if the danger does come home to roost sometimes, is friendship still worth it?

I don't know if these questions make you shudder a little when you consider them for real. If so, then I'm on the right track.

In fact, the questions did make me shudder. These are questions that I, as a person, care about. And I shudder because I'm not sure what the answers are, but I wish I did. They are issues of real life – and specifically have a bearing on *my* life.

The last elements fell into place. The game would be about characters who had served together. Who had forged friendships in battle, and now, having left the service, were still friends. Each would be a wanderer in one way or another: someone who did not know how to settle down. But still, by definition of the game, had a need for friends and friendship. As they adventured, both working together and pursuing their own goals, their commitment to each other and to the concept of Friendship would be tested.

Thus, I had a group of PCs bound not by the concept of "The Party" nor rules mechanics that promised bennies if they stuck together. But a mechanic that said, "In the sprawl of space, *friendship* is what makes you *human*." The stress on friendship, the pulling away and pulling back together allows an elasticity of behaviors. I don't need them stuck together like a multi-legged beast, because I know that human beings – being pattern making creatures – will strive to orbit this definition of Humanity. It might be an elliptical orbit: sometimes they will orbit close, and other times their orbit will take them at a far distance... but it will always be centered on this concept.

This definition will not only apply to the Player Characters in regard to each other, but to other NPCs. How they treat people they meet, who they let into their circle, who they deny, who they remain loyal to or betray will serve as the backbone of their adventures.

When I look back on my dreams of a *Traveller* game from when I first picked it up, to my revelation of *The Man Who Would Be King*, to my discovery of new games over the past ten years, I see that this kind of game, with Friendship as the center point and stress point of the game, is exactly the kind of game I would have wanted.

In the stories of Conan and other memorable characters from the sword & sorcerery pulps – the springwell of Ron's *Sorcerer & Sword* – the characters are always making new friends, befriending folks in need, and deciding where they'll draw the line on who they'll live or die for. It is my belief that this is a perfect thematic mapping for the universe of *Traveller*.

After all, are not the first words anyone reads when encountering the game of *Traveller* a plea for help from a stranger?

This is Free Trader Beowulf,
Calling anyone...
Mayday, Mayday... we are under attack...
Main drive is gone...
Turret number one not responding...
Mayday... loosing cabin pressure fast...
Calling anyone... please help...
This is Free Trader Beowulf...
Mayday...

Who is this person who needs help? What new troubles or friendship will be engendered if I answer that call? How complicated will my life become? What happens if I don't help? What happens if I do?

It is my hope and expectations that this current combination of rules and setting will deliver on the promise of that S.O.S.

EQUIPMENT

In general, the equipment the Player Characters begin with will be handle on a story-by-story basis, as determined by the GM and the Players. Sometimes they will begin with all the equipment they would expect to have as members of a first rate mercenary company. Other times they might start the story wandering a desert, bereft of gear, wondering how they'll find their next meal.

The following items are listed to give Players an idea of the variety and relative value of equipment scattered across the Imperium. Each item is listed with the Technology Level needed to manufacture it, its mass (in kg) and its cost. If an item's mass or cost is not listed, then its mass or cost is negligible.

Credits

The Credit (Cr.) is the standard unit of currency in Traveller. Larger denominations include the KiloCredit (KCr; 1,000 Credits) and the MegaCredit (MCr; 1,000,000 Credits).

Armour

Unless otherwise noted, only one type of armour can be worn at a time.

Jack (TL 1): A natural or synthetic leather jacket or body suit covering the torso and upper arms and legs.

Mesh (TL 6): A jacket or body suit lined with a flexible metal or plastic mesh that gives it added protection against bullets. Ballistic cloth reduces damage from slug throwers by one damage value type.

Ballistic Cloth (TL 7): A heavy duty body suit tailored from ballistic cloth. The fabric absorbs impact energy and spreads it over the body, which can result in bruising. However, cloth armour is highly useful and versatile

– it can be effectively concealed under normal clothing although observers making a successful perception check will notice something unusual. Ballistic cloth reduces damage from slug throwers by two damage value types.

Flak Jacket (TL 7): A less expensive version of ballistic cloth, the bulky flak jacket is an unmistakably military garment. Ballistic cloth reduces damage from slug throwers by two damage value types.

Vacc Suit (TL 8): The vacc suit or space suit is the spacer's best friend, providing life support and protection when in space. A vacc suit provides a breathable atmosphere and protection from the extremes of temperature, low pressure and radiation typically found in a hard vacuum, for six hours.

Hostile Environment Vacc Suit (TL 8): Hostile environment suits are designed for conditions where a normal vacc suit would be insufficient, such as deep underwater, worlds shrouded in toxic or corrosive gases, extremes of radiation or temperature, or other locales that offer serious physical danger as well as the lack of a breathable atmosphere. HEV suits provide all the life support offered by a normal vacc suit (for six hours) but are also impervious to flames, intense radiation such as that found at nuclear blast sites, and high pressure environments like undersea trenches.

Ablat (TL 9): A cheap alternative to Reflec, ablat armour is made from a material that ablates (vaporises) when hit by laser fire. Each laser hit on ablat reduces its armour value (versus lasers) by one, but the armour is cheap and easily replaceable. Ablat reduces damage from laser attacks by two damage value types.

Reflec (TL 10): Reflec armour is a flexible plastic suit with layers of reflective material and heat-dispersing gel. It is highly effective against lasers, but provides no protection against other attacks. Reflec can be worn with other armour. Reflec reduces damage from laser attacks by two damage value types.

Combat Armour (TL 11): This full-body suit is used by the military and not generally available on the open market, although those with military or criminal contacts can obtain it without much difficulty. It is issued to troop units and mercenary battalions. Combat armour protects from hard vacuum in the same way as a vacc

suit and provides life support for six hours. Combat armor reduces damage from ballistic damage by two damage value types, as laser attacks by one.

Battle Dress (TL 13): The ultimate personal armour, battle dress is a powered form of combat armour. The servomotors vastly increase the user's speed and strength, boosting his Stamina by +1 Die. Ballistic damage to the wearer's characteristics is calculated as Fist/Bludgeon for both lasers slug throwers. The suit has a built-in computer running a program to give tactical advice and updates and is commonly outfitted with numerous upgrades, and provides an additional +1 die to Stamina. The suit is fully enclosed, with a six-hour air supply and gives full protection against environmental hazards – including NBC shielding – as if it was an HEV suit. TL 14 battle dress is considerably stronger, giving Stamina +2 instead of +1.

Options

Most of the options listed here can also be applied to normal clothing at the same cost. The exceptions are extended life support and grav assist.

Eye Protection (TL 6): Many armours include eye protection such as visors or goggles to guard against flying debris but such protection becomes absolutely vital at TL 9 to guard against the blinding effects of lasers. Eye protection can be added to any armour and is included for free in any TL 9+ armour. Cr 50.

Magnetic Grapples (TL 8): Magnetic plates in the boots of the armour allow the user to walk normally on a spacecraft without artificial gravity. Cr. 100.

Computer Weave (TL 10): Computer weave can be added to any armour that does not already have a computer system, and gives Computer links to that armour. Cr 500.

Extended Life Support (TL 10): This upgrade can be added to any suit that provides life support (vacc suit, HEV suit, combat armour, battle dress). By adding high-pressure oxygen tanks and recycling systems, the suit now provides eighteen hours of oxygen. Cr. 10,000.

Medikit (TL 10): An internal medical scanner and drug injector, the medikit can be installed in combat armour, battle dress or a vacc suit. It automatically applies first aid if the wearer takes 2 X Stamina in penalties. If life

support systems are failing (turning remaining minutes of life support into hours). Cr 5,000. A TL 11 medikit can also inject Combat or Slow drugs and the Slow Drug antidote on command. Cr 10,000.

Smart Fabric (TL 10): Smart fabric resists stains and dirt, cleaning itself automatically. Cr. 1,000.

IR Chameleon (TL 12): IR (infra-red) chameleon technology can be added to any full-body suit of clothing or armour. It selectively bleeds heat to match background IR levels and effectively renders the wearer invisible to IR. IR Chameleon costs Cr. 5,000.

Grav Assist (TL 12): This upgrade can be added to combat armour or battle dress only, and adds the functionality of a grav belt to the armour at the cost of Cr. 110,000. The TL 15 version lasts longer. Costs Cr 120,000.

Vislight Chameleon (TL 13): A more advanced form of IR Chameleon, Vislight Chameleon covers the surface of the armour with light-bending technology, making the wearer nearly invisible to the naked eye (+4 DM to Stealth rolls). Vislight Chameleon costs Cr. 50,000.

Weapons

Weapons are described with the following statistics:

TL: The lowest Technology Level at which the weapon is available.
Range: The range modifiers used for that weapon.
Damage: The damage the weapon inflicts.
Auto: The Auto rating of the weapon if it is capable of automatic fire.
Recoil: The Recoil rating of the weapon.
Mass: The amount, in kilograms, that the weapon weighs on a world with Earth-like gravity.
Magazine: The number of shots the weapon can take before needing to be reloaded or connected to a new power pack. Unless specified otherwise in the weapon's description it takes only a single minor action to reload or two to switch to a new power pack.
Cost: The weapon's cost in credits.

Ammo Cost/Power Pack: The cost in credits to buy a spare magazine for a gun or a spare power pack for an energy weapon.

For the purposes of this game, these details are elements are mostly to be used by the Players to add color and gain Bonus Dice through the use of details.

Slug throwers and lasers use the same rows as their respective weapon type (a slug thrower rifle and a laser rifle use the same row on the Damage Table). The difference is the ability of the target to defend: lasers slice through armour designed to protect against ballistic attacks, and laser defences fail against slugs.

Frequency of reload, ammunition capacity and other details do differentiate the weapons, but these differences should usually be handled in the context of narrative and not in a shot by shot manner.

Melee Weapons

Blade: A hybrid knife weapon, somewhere between a dagger and a cutlass, with a large basket hilt.

Broadsword: A heavy two-handed sword.

Cutlass: The standard shipboard blade weapon, often kept near airlocks to repel boarders.

Club: Whether a handy length of metal piping or an extending riot baton made of advanced polymers, the club remains a popular and practical weapon wherever intelligent species gather.

Dagger: Daggers are especially suited to close-quarters combat.

Improvised Weapon: When there's no real weapon available and your bare hands just aren't enough, any snatched-up object can be used as an impromptu club.

Shield: A character using a shield increases their effective Melee (unarmed) skill by one level when parrying. A character with no Melee counts as having Melee 0 when using a shield to parry.

Staff: A length of wood or metal that can be used in a variety of combat styles, to aid walking, or to poke potentially dangerous things from a distance.

Stunstick: This melee weapon deals 2d6 stun damage in addition to its normal damage. A character struck by a stun stick must make an Endurance check with a negative DM equal to the stun damage (after armour is subtracted). If this Endurance check is failed, the character is knocked unconscious.

Slug Throwers

Accelerator Rifle: Also known as gyrojet weapons, accelerator rifles are designed for zero-gravity combat. They fire tiny missiles that leave the rifle with minimal velocity and thus minimal recoil, then accelerate to high speed.

Advanced Combat Rifle (ACR): The ultimate evolution of the conventional firearm, advanced combat rifles are the weapon of choice for many military units. Standard equipment includes an electronic battlefield sight, incorporating both light amplification and IR abilities, visual magnification up to 5x zoom, and a laser rangefinder which may also be used as a target painting device (reveals exact distance to target). The weapon is also gyroscopically stabilised during firing.

Antique Pistol: Unless the weapon is especially well made, it will have a –1 DM to attacks. Antique pistols require three minor actions and a successful Gun Combat (slug pistol) check to reload. Failure means you have to start again.

Antique Rifle: Unless the weapon is especially well made, it will have a –1 DM to attacks. Antique rifles require three minor actions and a successful Gun Combat (slug rifle) check to reload. Failure means you have to start again.

Assault Rifle: Assault rifles fire lighter projectiles than rifles, but are capable of a higher rate of fire and are more suitable to short-range encounters.

Autopistol: Variants of this semi-automatic pistol are the standard sidearm for law enforcement officers and criminals.

Autorifle: Automatic rifles have a higher muzzle velocity and are capable of automatic fire. Also termed battle rifles.

Body Pistol: Body pistols are manufactured from plastics and cultured bone, making them very difficult to detect using conventional weapons scanners. Body pistols increase the difficulty of Sensors checks to detect them to Very Difficult (–4).

Gauss Rifle: Gauss rifles replace conventional rifles at TL 13. Like the smaller gauss pistol, rifles fire high-velocity projectiles using electromagnetic rails.

Gauss Pistol: Gauss pistols use electromagnetic coils to accelerate metallic darts to hypersonic speeds. Gauss weapons are lightweight, efficient and deadly.

Revolver: A conventional six-shooter handgun. Revolvers take two minor actions to reload.

Rifle: Reloading a rifle requires two minor actions.

Shotgun: A shotgun using pellet ammunition ignores Dodge dice modifiers, but Armour gives double protection against pellet attacks. A shotgun can also fire solid slugs, which follow all the normal rules for shooting.

Snub Pistol: These lightweight, low-recoil weapons were designed for use aboard spacecraft and in zero gravity.

Energy Weapons

A laser that hits with 2 x Stamina will permanently blind its target unless they are wearing some sort of eye protection.

Laser Carbine: Laser carbines are shorter and lighter than laser rifles, and have a correspondingly shorter range.

Laser Pistol: The TL 9 pistol is bulky, but effective, with no recoil and a large magazine. At TL 11, advances in battery technology and miniaturisation mean that the pistol is no larger than a conventional firearm, but must still be connected to a battery pack for sustained use.

Laser Rifle: Laser rifles are highly accurate at long range. They are powered by heavy backpacks, although they have an internal battery that can store enough energy for six shots for mobile sniping.

Plasma Rifle/ PGMP (treat as Big Auto-Gun on Damage Table): TL 16 technology allows the bulky reactor and plasma chamber of the PGMP to be made small enough to fit into a rifle frame. The plasma rifle is a high-power sniper weapon designed to crack Battle Dress; damage is reduced by one row with the weapon, rather than to Fist/Bludgeon. Because of its internal reactor it never runs out of ammunition.

Stunners: Stun weapons are non-lethal and do not inflict normal damage. A character struck by a stun weapon must make a Will roll equal to or greater than the Stunners success the following round or fall unconscious.

Grenades

Aerosol: Aerosol grenades create a fine mist six metres in radius that diffusess lasers but does not block normal vision. Any laser attack made through the mist has its damage reduced by 10. Laser communications through the mist are completely blocked. The mist dissipates in 1d6 x 3 rounds, although high winds and other extreme weather can sharply reduce this time.

Frag: The damage from fragmentation grenades decreases with distance from the blast:

Distance	Damage Type
3 metres	Big auto-gun
6 metres	Rifle
9 metres	Nasty big handgun

Smoke: Smoke grenades create a thick cloud of smoke six metres in radius, centred on the location of the grenade. This smoke imposes a –1 Penalty Die on all attacks within or through the cloud (doubled for laser weapons). Smoke dissipates in 1d6 x 3 rounds, although high winds and other extreme weather can sharply reduce this time.

Stun: Stun weapons are non-lethal and do not inflict normal damage. A character struck by a stun weapon must make a Will roll equal to or greater than the Stunners success the following round or fall unconscious. If the Will roll is successful, the effect of the stun grenade is ignored.

Heavy Weapons

Grenade Launcher: Grenade launchers are used to fire grenades over long distances.

RAM Grenade Launcher: Rocket Assisted Multi-purpose grenade launchers have a longer range and are capable of firing up to three grenades with a single attack. This uses the rules for firing on full auto; unlike other weapons with an Auto score, a RAM grenade launcher cannot fire in burst mode. It takes two minor actions to reload a RAM grenade launcher.

Rocket Launcher: To counteract the recoil of the weapon, a rocket launcher channels exhaust backwards in an explosive backblast. Anyone up to 1.5 metres behind a rocket launcher when it fires takes 3d6 damage from the burning gasses. Vehicle-mounted rocket launchers lose this side-effect as a vehicle is a more stable firing platform than a person. It takes three minor actions to reload a rocket launcher.

PGMP: It is so heavy and bulky that it can only be used easily by a trooper with a Stamina of 5 or more – usually attained by wearing battle dress. Every point by which a user's Stamina falls short is a –1 Penalty Die on any attack rolls made with it.

FGMP: It includes a gravity suspension system to reduce its inertia, making it easier to use than the PGMP (minimum Strength 9) and fires what amounts to a directed nuclear explosion. Those without radiation protection who are nearby when a FGMP is fired will suffer a lethal dose of radiation – each firing of an FGMP emits 2d6 x 20 rads, which will affect everyone within the immediate vicinity.

Explosives

Use the table below to determine damage. The roll to set or use the charges can be either Stamina or Past, or both, as is appropriate.

Plastic: This generic, multi-purpose plastic explosive is a favourite of military units, terrorists, demolition teams and adventurers across known space.

TDX: An advanced gravity-polarised explosive, TDX explodes only along the horizontal axis.

Pocket Nuke: Hideously illegal on many worlds, the pocket nuke is actually the size of a briefcase and so is too large to fit into a grenade launcher.

Explosives

Weapon	TL	Damage Row	Radius	Cost (Cr.)
Plastic	6	Big Auto-Gun	2d6 metres	200
TDX	12	Big Auto-Gun	4d6 metres	1,000
Pocket Nuke	12	Special Damage Lethal (treat as Power 10)	15d6 metres	20,000

Options

Grenade Launcher (TL 8): An underslung RAM grenade launcher can be added to any rifle at the cost of 1,000 Cr. This grenade launcher has a magazine of one grenade, cannot fire on automatic and takes two rounds to reload.

Laser Sight (TL 8): Integrated optics and laser sights give removes the penalty for not spending a round aiming by one die (normally it is 2). Cr 100. At TL 10, x-ray lasers and improved display technology removes the tell-tale 'red dot' of a vislight laser. Cr 200.

Silencer (TL 8): A silencer can be added to any slug thrower with Auto 4 or less, masking the sound produced by firing. Cr. 250.

Gyrostabiliser (TL 9): Stabilisers can be added to any weapon with recoil, reducing the recoil by one point at the cost of 300 credits.

Secure Weapon (TL 10): A secure weapon requires authentication in some fashion (scanning the user's DNA or iris patterns, entering a password, transmission of an unlocking code from a comm) before it can be fired. Cr. 100.

Intelligent Weapon (TL 11): This adds Computer/0 to any weapon. Cr 1,000. The TL 13 upgrade adds Computer/1 to any weapon. Cr 5,000.

WORLD CREATION

The planets of the Imperium vary greatly in terms of physical details, population, government and culture. This vast variety creates tension within the Imperium, but is a source of delight for Travellers who wander the stars. This section lays out a means by which different worlds are identified and created.

World Occurrence: There is a basic one-half chance normally that a world (and its attendant stellar system) will be in a hex. Systematically check each hex on the subsector map, throwing one die and marking the hex with a circle if the result is a 4, 5, or 6. This indicates that a world is present; otherwise, leave the hex blank.

The Referee may elect to alter the normal chances of worlds, making them more frequent or less frequent to correspond to specific regions of the galaxy. A 50% density (no DM) is appropriate for the spiral arms of the galaxy. Apply a –2 DM for 'rift sectors', a –1 DM for sparse sectors and a +1 DM for densely populated sectors.

Universal Planetary Profile: Every world is rated on a scale of 0 through fifteen on six factors:

- the planet's SIZE
- the quality of the ATMOSPHERE
- the percent of water on the planet (HYDROGRAPHICS)
- the size of the planet's POPULATION
- the GOVERNMENT type
- the LAW LEVEL
- the TECHNOLOGY LEVEL, which is the world's highest level of technology used across the planet

These factors can be created by choice, or they can be rolled randomly, with each value affecting other values as die modifiers, as described below. It is up to the GM and the Players to interpret these values and create consistent and interesting Worlds from the results.

Starport Type: Many worlds have starports, their presence being essential to interstellar trade and commerce.

Bases: Stellar systems may have bases for military forces, the navy, the scouts, or for other arms of interstellar government.

Bases will also help determine political boundaries in the sector. An interstellar government will place bases along its borders to guard against aggression from rival states, or to control local systems. The presence of multiple bases within a few parsecs might indicate a contested border, or a mighty stronghold.

Gas Giants: A star system may have one or more gas giant planets. The presence of a gas giant allows starships equipped with fuel scoops to refuel by skimming; this eliminates fuel cost for the vessel and increases profit. It also allows refuelling at systems that do not have starports. Refuelling in this fashion requires 1–6 hours per 40 tons of fuel.

Gas giants are relatively common. For each system throw 10+ on 2d6 for at least one gas giant not to be present in the system.

Travel Zones: Most worlds are assumed to be civilized, or at least amenable to travellers and visitors. Some, however, are caught in the throes of war, plagued by disease, or simply not ready for interstellar visitors. Such worlds are classified by travel zones to denote such status. In most cases, the Referee should indicate travel zones based on the information available. Two such zone types exist: amber and red.

Polities: Worlds may be independent, or part of a larger polity that spans a system or more. Polities range from loose confederations of a few worlds with common trade or defence policies or cultural links, to vast star empires containing thousand of systems and trillions of citizens. Polity borders should be drawn on the map. Note that larger polities will usually have sub-domains, which should also be marked.

Communications Routes: Within the subsector, local governments will have established communications routes connecting some (but not all) worlds. These routes serve as a conduit for messages between businesses and between governments as well as between people.

Communications routes should be carefully drawn so as to avoid making all parts of the subsector accessible; a subsector should have some areas as backwaters for exploration and adventure. Communications routes are drawn as single lines connecting hexes on the subsector grid.

Trade Routes: Trade routes link worlds that have strong commercial ties. Consult the table below – if any pair of worlds matching the two columns are within four parsecs of each other, and there is a Jump–1 or Jump–2 route between them, then mark a trade route connecting those two worlds.

Column 1	Column 2
Industrial or High Tech	Asteroid, Desert, Ice Capped, Non-Industrial
High Population or Rich	Agricultural, Garden, Water World

World Creation

The basic planetary characteristics are Size, Atmosphere, Hydrology, Population, Government, Law Level, Technology Level, Starport and Bases, and are generated using two-dice throws, with DMs applied based on other characteristics. These characteristics establish the basic identity of a world, and are referred to as the Universal World Profile (UWP). Additional information can be generated, and should be, to more fully describe a world.

Size

The Size characteristic for inhabitable worlds ranges from 0 to 10, and is determined by rolling 2d6–2.

Size Table

Digit	World Size	Surface Gravity (gs)
0	800 km	Negligible
1	1,600 km	0.05
2	3,200 km	0.15
3	4,800 km	0.25
4	6,400 km	0.35
5	8,000 km	0.45
6	9,600 km	0.7
7	11,200 km	0.9
8	12,800 km	1.0
9	14,400 km	1.25
10 (A)	16,000 km	1.4

High and Low Gravity Worlds

Worlds where the gravity is 0.75 or less are low-gravity worlds. Common features include improbable-looking rock formations, thin and spindly life forms and flying as a common form of locomotion (assuming the atmosphere is thick enough to support flyers). Humans tend to find life on low-gravity worlds to be initially pleasant, but regular exercise regimes and medicinal supplements are required to prevent bone and muscle degradation. Those who spent too long on low-gravity worlds cannot tolerate higher gravities. Characters on low-gravity worlds suffer a –1 DM to all skill checks until they acclimatise, a process which takes 1d6 weeks. Characters with the Zero-G skill at level 0 or better acclimatise instantly.

High-gravity worlds have a gravity 1.25 times or more than of Earth. They tend to be extremely dense worlds; common features include wide rocky plains, squat, muscular creatures, and plant life that spreads out like lichen instead of growing up. Crawling, burrowing or swimming are the commonest forms of locomotion. Humans find high-gravity worlds unpleasant. Especially high-gravity worlds require the use of pressured or

powered suits to support the human frame. Characters on high-gravity worlds suffer a –1 DM to all skill checks until they acclimatise, a process which takes 1d6 weeks.

Atmosphere

A planet's Atmosphere is generated by rolling 2d6–7 + the planet's Size.

Atmosphere Table

Digit	Atmosphere	Pressure	Survival Gear Required
0	None	0.00	Vacc Suit
1	Trace	0.001 to 0.09	Vacc Suit
2	Very Thin, Tainted	0.1 to 0.42	Respirator, Filter
3	Very Thin	0.1 to 0.42	Respirator
4	Thin, Tainted	0.43 to 0.7	Filter
5	Thin	0.43 to 0.7	
6	Standard	0.71–1.49	
7	Standard, Tainted	0.71–1.49	Filter
8	Dense	1.5 to 2.49	
9	Dense, Tainted	1.5 to 2.49	Filter
10 (A)	Exotic	Varies	Air Supply
11 (B)	Corrosive	Varies	Vacc Suit
12 (C)	Insidious	Varies	Vacc Suit
13 (D)	Dense, High	2.5+	
14 (E)	Thin, Low	0.5 or less	
15 (F)	Unusual	Varies	Varies

Atmosphere Types

Tainted: Tainted atmospheres contain some element that is harmful to humans, such as an unusually high proportion of carbon dioxide. A character who breathes a tainted atmosphere without a filter will suffer 1d6 damage every few minutes (or hours, depending on the level of taint).

Exotic: An exotic atmosphere is unbreathable by humans, but is not otherwise hazardous. A character needs an air supply to breath in an exotic atmosphere.

Corrosive: Corrosive atmospheres are highly dangerous. A character who breathes in a corrosive atmosphere will suffer 1d6 damage
each round.

Insidious: An insidious atmosphere is like a corrosive one, but it is so corrosive that it attacks equipment as well. The chief danger in an insidious atmosphere is that the toxic gases will destroy the seals and filters on the character's protective gear. An insidious atmosphere worms its way past protection after 2d6 hours on average, although vigilant maintenance or advanced protective gear can prolong survival times.

Dense, High (D): These worlds have thick N2/O2 atmospheres, but their mean surface pressure is too high to support unprotected human life (high pressure nitrogen and oxygen are deadly to humans). However, pressure naturally decreases with increasing altitude, so if there are highlands at the right altitude the pressure may drop enough to support human life. Alternatively, there may not be any topography high enough for humans to inhabit, necessitating floating gravitic or dirigible habitats or sealed habitats on the surface.

Thin, Low (E): The opposite of the Dense, High atmosphere, these massive worlds have thin N2/O2 atmospheres that settle in the lowlands and depressions and are only breathable there – the pressure drops off so rapidly with altitude that the highest topographic points of the surface may be close to vacuum.

Unusual (F): An Unusual atmosphere is a catchall term for an atmosphere that behaves in a strange manner. Examples include ellipsoidal atmospheres, which are thin at the poles and dense at the equator; Panthalassic worlds composed of a rocky core surrounded by a water layer hundreds of kilometres thick; worlds wracked by storms so intense that that the local air pressure changes from dense to thin depending on the current wearther; and other planets with unusual and hazardous atmospheric conditions.

Hydrographics

Hydrographic percentage is obtained by rolling 2d6–7 and adding the planet's Size, modified by the planet's atmosphere or size as described below:

Size 0 or 1	Hydrographics = 0
Atmosphere 0, 1, A, B or C	–4

If the planet's atmosphere is not D (or a kind of F that is thick enough to retain water) then also apply DMs for temperature:

Hot Temperature	–2
Roasting Temperature	–6

Hydrographics Table

Digit	Hydrographic %	Description
0	0%–5%	Desert world
1	6%–15%	Dry world
2	16%–25%	A few small seas.
3	26%–35%	Small seas and oceans.
4	36%–45%	Wet world
5	46%–55%	Large oceans
6	56%–65%	
7	66%–75%	Earth-like world
8	76%–85%	Water world
9	86%–95%	Only a few small islands and archipelagos.
10 (A)	96–100%	Almost entirely water.

Population

Population is generated by rolling 2d6–2:

Population Table

Digit	Population	Range	Description
0	None	0	
1	Few	1+	A tiny farmstead or a single family
2	Hundreds	100+	A village
3	Thousands	1,000+	
4	Tens of thousands	10,000+	Small town
5	Hundreds of thousands	100,000+	Average city
6	Millions	1,000,000+	
7	Tens of millions	10,000,000+	Large city
8	Hundreds of millions	100,000,000+	
9	Billions	1,000,000,000+	Present day Earth
10 (A)	Tens of billions	10,000,000,000+	
11 (B)	Hundreds of billions	100,000,000,000+	Incredibly crowded world
12 (C)	Trillions	1,000,000,000,000+	World-city

If a world has a population of 0, it is uninhabited and so has a Government, Law Level and Technology Level of 0.

Government

The Government characteristic is determined by rolling 2d6–7 and adding the planet's Population.

Government Table

Type	Government
0	None
1	Company/Corporation
2	Participating Democracy
3	Self-Perpetuating Oligarchy
4	Representative Democracy
5	Feudal Technocracy
6	Captive Government
7	Balkanisation
8	Civil Service Bureaucracy
9	Impersonal Bureaucracy
10 (A)	Charismatic Dictator
11 (B)	Non-Charismatic Leader
12 (C)	Charismatic Oligarchy
13 (D)	Religious Dictatorship
Type	Government
0	None

Rivals, Factions, Connections and Colonies

Roll 1d3 to determine how many factions there are on the planet, with a DM of +1 if the government type is 0 or 7, and a DM of –1 if the government type is 10 or more. Determine what 'mini-government' each faction uses on the government table. In cases where the faction type is the same as the current government type, then it is a splinter faction within the ruling government. In cases where it is radically different, then the faction is a rebel group or movement.

Roll 2d6 to determine the strength of each faction:

FACTION STRENGTH TABLE

Roll	Relative Strength
1–3	Obscure group – few have heard of them, no popular support
4–5	Fringe group – few supporters
6–7	Minor group – some supporters
8–9	Notable group – significant support, well known
10–11	Significant – nearly as powerful as the government
12	Overwhelming popular support – more powerful than the government

Law Level

Law level is determined by rolling 2d6–7 and adding the Government characteristic.

Law Level Table – Illegal Possessions

Digit	Weapons	Drugs	Information	Technology	Travellers	Psionics
0	No restrictions.					
1	Poison gas, explosives, undetectable weapons, WMD	Highly addictive and dangerous narcotics	Intellect programs	Dangerous technologies such as nanotechnology	Visitors must contact planetary authorities by radio, landing is permitted anywhere	Dangerous talents must be registered.
2	Portable energy weapons (except ship-mounted weapons)	Highly addictive narcotics	Agent programs	Alien technology	Visitors must report passenger manifest, landing is permitted anywhere	All psionic powers must be registered; use of dangerous powers forbidden.
3	Heavy weapons	Combat drugs	Intrusion programs	TL 15 items	Landing only at starport or other authorised sites	Use of telepathy restricted to government-approved telepaths
4	Light assault weapons and submachine guns	Addictive narcotics	Security programs	TL 13 items	Landing only at starport	Use of teleportation and clairvoyance restricted
5	Personal concealable weapons	Anagathics	Expert programs	TL 11 items	Citizens must register offworld travel, visitors must register all business	Use of all psionic powers restricted to government psionicists
6	All firearms except shotguns and stunners; carrying weapons discouraged	Fast and Slow drugs	Recent news from offworld.	TL 9 items	Visits discouraged; excessive contact with citizens forbidden	Possession of psionic drugs banned
7	Shotguns	All narcotics	Library programs, unfiltered data about other worlds. Free	TL 7 items	Citizens may not leave planet; visitors may not leave starport	Use of psionics forbidden

Digit	Weapons	Drugs	Information	Technology	Travellers	Psionics
			speech curtailed.			
8	All bladed weapons, stunners	Medicinal drugs	Information technology, any non-critical data from offworld, personal media.	TL 5 items	Landing permitted only to imperial agents	Psionic-related technology banned
9+	Any weapons	All drugs	Any data from offworld. No free press.	TL 3 items	No offworlders permitted	All psionics

The Law and Travellers

In each of the following situations, roll 2d6, add the listed modifiers, and if the total is lower than the planet's Law Level, the characters are investigated or challenged by agents of planetary law enforcement.

Situation	DM	Response
First approach to a planet	+0	Check
Offworlders wandering the streets of a city (once per day)	+0	Check
Offworlders acting suspiciously	–1	Check
Bar fight	–1	Combat
Shots fired	–2	Combat
Breaking and entering	–2	Investigate
Firefight involving armoured characters and military weapons	–4	Combat
Murder and carnage	–4	Investigate

Check means that the characters' travel documents and identities are checked, either by a police officer or guard, or by electronically by querying the characters' comms. A successful Admin or Streetwise roll can allay suspicion but if this check is failed the planetary authorities move on to Investigation.

Investigate means that a detective or bureaucrat probes deeper into the characters' backgrounds. If the characters have a ship, it will be searched. They may be followed, or have their communications tapped. They may also be questioned closely.

Finally, Combat means that the police show up ready for a fight. Their response will generally be proportional to the threat posed by the player characters; if the characters are just making trouble in a bar, then most police forces will just use batons, stunners, tranq gas and other non-lethal weapons. On the other hand, if the characters are in Battle Dress and firing PGMPs at the palace of the planetary duke, then the police will show up with the best weapons and armour available at the planet's TL (or even a few levels higher).

Characters arrested for a crime will face punishment, determined by rolling 2d6+DMs on the Sentencing table. For crimes involving smuggling banned goods, the DM is equal to the difference between the planet's law level and the banned goods in question. Other crimes have a set DM:

Assault	Law level –5
Destruction of Property	Law level –3
False Identity	Law level –2
Manslaughter	Law level –1
Murder	Law level +0

A result of Exile means that the character must leave the planet immediately and never return. Fines for smuggling goods are per ton of goods seized – gun running can be an extremely risky proposition.

Sentencing Roll	Sentence
0 or less	Dismissed or trivial punishment
1–2	Fine of 1d6 x 1,000 credits
3–4	Fine of 2d6 x 5,000 credits
5–6	Exile or a fine of 2d6 x 10,000 credits
7–8	Imprisonment for 1d6 months or exile or fine of 2d6 x 20,000 credits
9–10	Imprisonment for 1d6 years or exile
11–12	Imprisonment for 2d6 years or exile
13–14	Life imprisonment
15+	Death

STARPORT

Starports generally have two components: a surface facility and an orbital facility.

The surface facility includes cargo handling installations, a landing field, control towers, and other necessary areas. Surface starport components are frequently called Down (as in Regina Down Starport).

Orbital facilities are present (usually in stationary orbit above the surface component) to enable handling of unstreamlined ships, and to allow construction of heavy craft in orbit. The orbital component is often called Orbital (as in Regina Orbital Starport).

Type D and E starports have no extensive orbital facilities, but usually have navigational satellites or similar equipment. Non-streamlined ships at these starports must be serviced by shuttles. Starports, being the primary point at which starships interact with a system, are usually the location for additional bases, such as scout bases, naval bases or other military installations, and for shipyards.

To determine the level of a starport on a planet, roll 2d6:

STARPORT TABLE

Roll	Starport Class	Quality	Shipyards	Repair	Refuel
2 or less	X	None	--	--	--
3 or 4	E	Frontier	--	--	--
5 or 6	D	Poor	--	Minor	Unrefined
7 or 8	C	Routine	--	Major	Unrefined
9 or 10	B	Good	Spacecraft	Overhaual	Refined
11+	A	Excellent	Starship	Overhaul	Refined

Technology Level

Technology Levels measure the scientific capacity of a world and the effectiveness of equipment. The Average Imperium Technology Level is 13. There are lesser and greater techlevels scattered across the Imperium.

The Technology Level of the planet is determined by rolling 1d6 and adding DMs as follows:

Starport Value	DM	Size Value	DM	Atmosphere Value	DM
0		0	+2	0	+1
1		1	+2	1	+1
2	`	2	+1	2	+1
3		3	+1	3	+1
4		4	+1	4	
5		5		5	
6		6		6	
7		7		7	
8		8		8	
9		9		9	
10 (A)	+6	10 (A)		10 (A)	+1
11 (B)	+4	11 (B)		11 (B)	+1
12 (C)	+2	12 (C)		12 (C)	+1
13 (D)		13 (D)		13 (D)	+1
14 (E)		14 (E)		14 (E)	+1
15 (F)		15 (F)		15 (F)	+1
X	–4	X		X	

Hydro Value	DM	Population Value	DM	Government Value	DM
0	+1	0		0	+1
1		1	+1	1	
2		2	+1	2	
3		3	+1	3	
4		4	+1	4	
5		5	+1	5	+1
6		6		6	
7		7		7	+2
8		8		8	
9	+1	9	+1	9	
10 (A)	+2	10 (A)	+2	10 (A)	
11 (B)		11 (B)	+3	11 (B)	
12 (C)		12 (C)	+4	12 (C)	
13 (D)		13 (D)		13 (D)	–2
14 (E)		14 (E)		14 (E)	–2
15 (F)		15 (F)		15 (F)	

TL 0: (Primitive) No technology.
TL 1: (Primitive) Roughly on a par with Bronze or Iron age technology.
TL 2: (Primitive) Renaissance technology.
TL 3: (Primitive) The advances of TL 2 are now applied, bringing the germ of industrial revolution and steam power.

TL 4: (Industrial) The transition to industrial revolution is complete, bringing plastics, radio and other such inventions.
TL 5: (Industrial) TL 5 brings widespread electrification, tele-communications and internal combustion.
TL 6: (Industrial) TL 6 brings the development of fission power and more advanced computing.
TL 7: (Pre-Stellar) A pre-stellar society can reach orbit reliably and has telecommunications satellites.
TL 8: (Pre-Stellar) At TL 8, it is possible to reach other worlds in the same system, although terraforming or full colonisation are not within the culture's capacity.
TL 9: (Pre-Stellar) The defining element of TL 9 is the development of gravity manipulation, which makes space travel vastly safer and faster.
TL 10: (Early Stellar) With the advent of Jump, nearby systems are opened up.
TL 11: (Early Stellar) The first true artificial intelligences become possible, as computers are able to model synaptic networks.
TL 12: (Average Stellar) Weather control revolutionises terraforming and agriculture.
TL 13: (Average Stellar) The battle dress appears on the battlefield in response to the new weapons.
TL 14: (Average Stellar) Fusion weapons become man-portable.
TL 15: (High Stellar) Black globe generators suggest a new direction for defensive technologies, while the development of synthetic anagathics means that the human lifespan is now vastly increased.
Higher Technology Levels: Such technologies exist on forgotten worlds or might be discovered by pioneering scientists.

Bases

Naval: A naval base is a supply depot, refuelling station, repair yard or fortress of the Navy. Naval vessels can obtain refined fuel and supplies here.

Scout: A scout base offers refined fuel and supplies to scout ships.

Research: A Research base is dedicated to a particular field of research.

Consulate: A consulate is an administration office for various departments such as commerce, justice and foreign affairs. Characters wishing to report significant crimes or obtain various permits will need to visit a consulate.

Pirate: The presence of a pirate base in a system indicates that a group of thieves is active in the area. Pirates are unlikely to be operating out of the starport itself (except on a Law Level 0 world), but no doubt have agents at the port on the look-out for likely prey.

Travel Codes

There are two travel codes – Amber and Red. An Amber world has been deemed dangerous, and travellers are warned to be on their guard. Amber worlds are often undergoing upheaval or revolution, or else are naturally hazardous environments.

Red worlds are interdicted and travel to them is forbidden. A world might be Red because the world is too dangerous to allow visitors. Interdictions are enforced by the Navy.

A world with an Atmosphere of 10+, a government of 0, 7 or 10, or a Law Level of 0 or 9+ should be considered for Amber status. Red codes are given out at the discretion of the Referee.